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issue 15, volume 84 www.newbuffalotimes.com Thursday, April 17, 2025

Chikaming Township Board approves consent judgement regarding communication tower

PAGE 3

Service League, high school partner for spring beach clean-up

PAGE 5

Unsafe historic church building demolished

PAGE 9

Miss Bridgman Ava Starbuck crowned 2025 Miss Blossomtime

PAGE 10

Ribbon-cutting on tap for first Michigan section of Marquette Greenway

PAGE 18

WINNING STREAK HITS A HIGH NOTE…

BISON TAKE TWO!

— PAGE 7 —

PHOTO BY STAN MADDUX

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Chikaming Township Board approves consent judgement regarding communication tower

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the Chikaming Township Board of Trustees approved a TowerCo vs. Chikaming Township Proposed Consent Judgment at their meeting Thursday, April 10.

Last summer, the board denied the special land use request for an unmanned, 185-foot communication tower with a 5-foot lightening rod on top in a 50-foot-by-50-foot area being leased to TowerCo by Tower Hill Camp Association.

The Planning Commission had approved the SLU based on "what was allowable in the township per our zoning ordinance," Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte said.

Last fall, the township was served with legal proceedings from TowerCo. Through conversations with the township's attorney and other ones, Bunte said other potential options that there would be "within that area that still allowed for the coverage area that they were trying to maintain or needed to maintain with this proposed tower" were explored.

"We did propose through a few other recommendations from some residents of some property that could potentially work - they researched those options, and they didn't work within the limitations of what spaces they needed," Bunte said.

The tower wouldn't be allowed in the state park, he added.

He added that the comments and people that'd wrote in opposition of the project don't "hold weight with the FCC."

"Numerous other case studies or case law prior to that and everything reviewed since didn't bode well for the township because our zoning ordinance allowed it," Bunte said.

The township's attorney and the attorneys for TowerCo went into mediation, looking at all the options, which resulted in the consent judgement.

It was agreed that there'd be a 6-foot fence around it as well as a color scheme to try to blend the tower into the tree line as much as possible.

Bunte said he's concerned about the effect the tower would have to the township "as a whole."

"However, the potential detrimental long-term effect of us not approving this consent judgement, legally in trying to fight the FCC when we have little standing is enormous," he said.

Delaying the decision to hold a public hearing on the matter would not abide by the mediation timeline and result in a "full-fledged lawsuit against the township" Bunte said.

Trustee Rich Sullivan said he feels the public could've been updated on the matter in some form of communication.

"We can't necessarily take your input but we don't want you to feel like we're doing something behind your back," he said.

Bunte said that from a legal perspective, "it is extremely challenging what you can or cannot divulge."

"When it comes to trying to do additional communication, once you start divulging that there's a legal obligation that I have to the township as chief executive officer of those discussions I have and what I can and can't divulge - so I was doing my best to make sure I have the best interests of our residents, the best interests also of the township in those discussions and to come out of it to the best of my ability," he said.

Sullivan said "there's some things we have to do because this is how our rules are written."

"Because of the circumstances, because the zoning ordinance allowed it, I honestly don't think we have any other choice but to approve this for the sake of saving the township a tremendous amount of money – and I say that very reluctantly, but I'm also a realist about it," he said.

Bunte added that he feels all board members have empathy for the residents.

"I wish there was more we can do - the only thing we can do moving forward is amend our zoning ordinance, so it doesn't get into our residential communities, like this has happened," he said.

He added that there are "highly pocketed areas of our lakefront where our most condensed populations are that have trouble with cell phone service."

Board members approved the updated Parks and Recreation Department Five-Year Plan.

Board members agreed that Abonmarche, which completed a Pier Street Beach Engineering Review, will come next month to further discuss what's contained within the report before the board makes any decisions. Bunte said Abonmarche did an overview regarding the current state of the access at Pier Street Beach.

Board members approved the Bridgman Public Library's request for a board seat, which could be occupied by a resident of Chikaming Township, on the library board.

Once they've updated the bylaws, the library will send the township their criteria. The township will then get the word out about the open seat, which will be an appointed one, on its website or social media.

A resolution for the Berrien County Road Department on non-motorized infrastructure, which Bunte said essentially states that the "township portions of nonmotorized land infrastructure, current and future, are considered parks and recreation and will become a part of our Chikaming Township parks for future maintenance and maintenance funding," was approved.

In Ancient times, men that immediately "acted" on their sense-impressions were considered unsound.
—Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
VANCE PRICE, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJEWSKI, KAREN GEAR, RICH KNOLL, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
HOWARD MALES, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, BARBARA ANDERSON
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, JENNIFER SUMMERS, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, ARTHUR ANDERSON
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM
VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER, JACK GRACE, ED SEBASTIAN, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Village Council audit report shows increases in fund balances

BY THERESE DONNELLY

The Village of Three Oaks got good news from its recent routine audit, reporting increases in fund balances.

During the April 9 village council meeting, Derek Hall, an auditor at the Michigan Department of Treasury, presented an overview of the village's audit for the 2024 fiscal year.

He explained the village had seen an increase in most of its fund balances, in part because of an increase in taxable property values throughout the state. He noted the current state was in "the calm before the storm," before several projects are expected to begin, but the funds are there to cover these expenses.

While Hall said construction costs have increased, he said groundbreaking on the Hickory Street bridge will likely occur in the next fiscal year.

When asked by Village President Steve Graziano for an overall grade, Hall said Three Oaks got an "A - " for its financial health. He praised the village staff for their assistance in the audit.

Councilmembers recently conducted a review of Village Manager Dan Faulkner. Graziano said the positive result was reflected in the good audit review. He said the responses showed "strong overall support," with confidence in Faulkner's leadership.

The council approved a two-year contract renewal for Faulkner.

After the financial report card, the council approved the route for the Flag Day 5K run, set for June 7. The run will begin in Watkins Park, wind through residential streets south of U.S. 12 and loop back to the park.

The council passed a resolution to participate in the Michigan Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System (CLASS), a local government investment pool that enables municipalities to invest funds at favorable interest rates, while keeping the money readily available should a need arise.

When asked, Hall said CLASS is not covered by the FDIC, but said he could not recall the last time a bank failed, as bailouts and buyouts protect account holders from that risk.

The council discussed a request to waive a ready to serve charge at 105 Sycamore Street. The property is vacant and councilmembers sympathized, but explained the village qualifies for loans for the water sewer system based on the number of lines served. Eliminating ready to serve accounts would impact that.

The council agreed they did not want to set a precedent for other properties and chose to take no action.

Plans for Chamberlain Path are underway. Councilmember Mike Springer told the council that the Parks and Recreation Board is discussing relocating the plaque along the path, and moving some planters. Councilmember Becky Thomas asked why the sign would be moved from the entrance, where pedestrians along Elm can read. Springer said it was primarily for aesthetics.

There are also plans to plant trees in the Community Garden. The Village is in an agreement with AEP to allow the utility company to use part of the garden property to temporarily move lines during the Hickory Street bridge project. Faulkner said the agreement is temporary and will not affect the tree planting

The Council appointed Dave Lockhart and Mike Holfels to serve four-year terms on the Public Service Committee. They also passed set two-year terms for Jim Kramer, Richard Smith, Tom Flint and Dan Faulkner. Graziano explained this will prevent a complete turnover of members at the end of terms.

The Council also appointed Marco Chavarry and Tom Pauly to four-year terms on the Downtown Development Authority.

Following up on a discussion at previous meetings, the Council resolved to keep councilmember Joe Hinman as a voting member of the DDA and change the bylaws to increase the number of members to 11. There had been requests to increase representation of the south * but Graziano said the DDA represents the entire village.

Sidewalk installation on Magnolia Street has begun. Faulkner said contractors will remove trees, excavate old sections and pour new concrete. Two homeowners had requested the sidewalks along their properties be further from their homes than planned. The council authorized Faulkner to submit a change order to adjust the sidewalk path, remaining on village property.

Faulkner announced the recent water samples have passed state tests.

It's 106 miles to Chicago, we've got a full tank of gas, half a pack of cigarettes; it's dark and we're wearing sunglasses.
— Elwood Blues, "The Blues Brothers" (1980)

Service League, high school partner for spring beach clean-up

STAFF REPORTS

Six students from New Buffalo High School and 12 members of the New Buffalo Service League worked together for a spring clean-up at the New Buffalo Public Beach and one Service League member started clean-up at Oselka Park Saturday, April 12.

The Service League volunteered to spearhead this effort for the city in preparation for the coming season. Students who volunteered earned community service hours.

The 77-year-old New Buffalo Service League is a charitable, non-profit organization dedicated to providing an annual Mary Ann Frey scholarship, additional scholarships, and needed funds, materials or assistance to various other charitable endeavors in the community. For more information, please see our page on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/newbuffaloserviceleague.

Sawyer man deceased after being struck on I-94

A Sawyer man is deceased after a semi-truck struck a pedestrian on Interstate 94 at the 14.2-mile marker on Interstate 94 near Browntown Road in Lake Township Saturday, April 12.

According to a press release from the Berrien County Sheriff's Office, at approximately 3:45 a.m. Saturday, first responders were sent to a semi-truck vs. pedestrian crash, where a deceased male subject was located lying in the third lane of traffic.

A statement provided by the truck driver reported that he was travelling eastbound on Interstate 94 when an animal appeared in the roadway, and he could not avoid a collision with it.

"After getting his truck stopped, he walked back towards the scene and found that he had struck a person," the release said.

Medic 1 arrived on scene a short time later and the pedestrian, who was identified as 35-year-old Jose Henandez of Sawyer, was pronounced deceased.

"The Berrien County Sheriff's Traffic Crash unit was called to the scene. Investigators found that Hernandez had been out walking some distance during the night and ended up on Interstate 94, where he eventually got hit," the release said.

The reason why he was on the highway is unknown.

The uninjured driver of the semi-truck was from Dearborn, Michigan. Drugs or alcohol didn't appear to be factors in this incident.

"Crash investigators are continuing to investigate, speaking with family member and friends, and seeking phone records to help determine why the pedestrian was on the roadway," the release said.

Responding agencies were Berrien County Sheriff's Patrol, Bridgman Police Department, Lake Township Fire, Chikaming Township Fire, WMED Medical Examiner, Medic 1 Ambulance and Berrien County Sheriffs Traffic Crash Unit.

-STAFF REPORTS

Overheated vehicle on private property catches three old barns on fire

BY STAN MADDUX

A vehicle trespassing on private property caught fire and the flames spread to three old wooden barns on land belonging to the owners of a nearby blueberry farm near the Michigan state line.

The largest barn was totally destroyed while another one sustained heavy damage, said Springfield Township Fire Chief Steve Marvel.

He said damage to the other barn was less extensive from being the last one to catch fire, giving firefighters time to save it.

According to La Porte County Police, the owner of the vehicle on Saturday, April 12, decided to pull on to the property on 925 North just west of Indiana 39.

The driver, Courtney Wilson, explained he was returning home from a laundromat in New Buffalo and simply wanted to enjoy the view of the countryside to get his mind off some personal things he's going through.

His van, a 2007 Honda Odyssey, became stuck in the muddy ground between two of the barns and, while using the gas and brake pedals to try and rock the vehicle out, smoke began rising from under the hood, police said.

Police said Wilson told investigators he then quickly saw rapidly spreading flames underneath the vehicle.

Marvel said the flames catching the grass on fire spread to two barns closest to the vehicle, which was totally destroyed.

He said the other barn was set ablaze by the extreme heat emitting from the largest barn, which was engulfed in flames when he parked his fire truck about 80 feet away.

"I could feel the heat as soon as I got out," he said.

Marvel said the barns did not seem to be used much except for one that appeared to have tires in it.

According to police, the property belongs to Dean Ott.

Ott is the owner of nearby Stateline Blueberries, a popular place for u-picking during the harvest season.

Federal funding to create diverse urban forest taken back

BY STAN MADDUX

A huge chunk of money remaining from a $1 million federal grant the City of La Porte was using for removing old and unhealthy trees has been snatched back.

Mayor Tom Dermody said he plans to meet soon with representatives of Congressman Rudy Yakym and decision makers involved in awarding the grant in an attempt to recover the lost revenue.

About $750,000 was remaining from the grant awarded by the U.S. Forest Service last year to conduct a lot more tree removal in the future.

Dermody said he supports tightening the financial belt on federal spending but taking back already awarded funds should not part of it.

"I'm a big believer the federal government has to live within their means and start getting control financially but you honor what you did," he said.

He went on to say tree removal here is in the best interest of public safety given the threat of property damage and harm posed by some of the trees.

A high percentage of the city's old trees are maples from mass plantings a century or more ago.

The plan is replacing those dying and diseased trees with different species of trees that won't result in the sidewalk damage that occurred from the large, shallow roots on the maples.

Dermody said he hopes the decision is not a misunderstanding over the wording contained in the city's grant application about the desire to achieve a more diverse urban forest given the opposing stance on human diversity by the new administration in the White House and the charge on spending cuts led by the president's new Department of Government Efficiency.

"We hope the word diverse hasn't caused a problem. You know what I'm saying?," he said.

Film Group to screen Charlie Chaplin Classic, 'The Great Dictator'

STAFF REPORTS

"The Great Dictator," a 1940 classic directed, written and acted by film great Charlie Chaplin will be screened at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 21, at the New Buffalo Township Library.

"We remember Chaplin most vividly as the 'Little Tramp' character, an icon of the silent screen era. But amazingly, Chaplin served as director, writer, dual-role lead action, producer and composer in making 'The Great Dictator,'" said Harbor Country Film Group Leader Eve Moran.

The story tells of an anonymous Jewish barber (Chaplin) who spends decades locked away in a hospital recovering from memory loss because of a war injury. He is unaware of the rise of Adenoid Hynkel (again, Chaplin) as the dictator leader of Tomania, he being a man of overblown vanity who dreams of becoming emperor of the world. While the film is funny, bold and adventurous, it also takes a most interesting spin.

Admission to Film Group meetings is free and open to all. Free popcorn will be served. The New Buffalo Library is at 33 N. Thompson Street in downtown New Buffalo.

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From the Bleachers

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

Last Thursday was the official opening of Major League Baseball, if you don't count that awkward two game series that pitted the Cubs against the Dodgers in Japan the week before.

I spent the afternoon listening to the White Sox, surprisingly, beat the Angels by a score of 8-1.

Last year,the Sox had the worst record in Major League Baseball history, and they really hadn't done much of anything at all to improve their team during the offseason.

It was an unexpected and welcomed victory for the South Siders. If nothing else, it gave White Sox fans and players hope that this season would be better than last. What a great story it would be if the Sox pulled a rabbit out of a hat and managed to play competitive games this season.

The Cubs were in Arizona, so their game against the Diamondbacks wasn't going to start until after 9:00 p.m.

The games in Tokyo started at 5:00 a.m., which is way too early for me, and the game in Arizona was going to finish near midnight, which was getting to be a little late for me, but I put on my big boy pants at about 8:30 p.m., and took off for my favorite establishment that I knew would have at least one of their many television sets tuned into the game.

The bar manager put the Cubs game on the TV right in front of me, while all around there were NCAA basketball games and the Bulls game.

Everyone settled in to watch the game of their choice, and all was right in this sports fans world. Often times, when everything seems perfect, things go awry, but not that opening day.

I love baseball, and even though I wish they would make the playing field more even, the game holds a special place in my heart.

My Dad would take me out of school, drive all the way from the far south side of Chicago to Wrigley Field, so we could see the Cubs opener.

I took my children, my children took me and their children, etc..., my son and I peaked early but one of my grandsons is playing in college. I bought one of my granddaughters a Cub baby bottle when she was a baby and it quickly became her favorite. My mood is directly related to how the Cubs do, especially on opening day.

Well, this year, I was a happy camper as the Cubbies prevailed by a score of 10-6.

The cherry on top was the Bulls. Josh Giddey threw up a half court prayer at the buzzer-beater that hit nothing but net, to beat LeBron James and the LA Lakers at 119-117. The Bulls are starting to be fun.

The NCAA basketball tournament is down to the Final Four, and for only the second time ever, all four teams remaining are number one seeds.

Happy spring !

Robin Williams said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's Party.'"

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

SPORTS

BISON OFF TO A RUMBLING START IN BASEBALL

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School varsity baseball team has started the season with six straight wins that include an impressive doubleheader sweep at home Tuesday, April 15.

The Bison defeated Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School 11-2 and 9-2.

In the first game, freshman pitcher Colten Lijewski went the distance in what was his first start on the mound at the high school level.

Lijewski, using a close to 80 mile per hour fastball and sweeping curve, recorded six strikeouts while walking just two batters.

"I felt good. I just had fun out there. I gave it my all," he said.

Head Coach Adam Lijewski said he was impressed but not surprised about the success of his nephew or his endurance.

"He's got a rubber arm. He just goes, goes, goes," he said.

Both runs given up by Lijewski came in the 3rd inning but the Bison responded by scoring three times largely from back to back triples on balls hit close to the outfield fence by seniors Vaugh Nikkel and Ethan Lijewski.

The Bison put the game away in the 5th inning with a two out rally that began with hitters loading the bases on a walk, error and infield single.

After a run scored from a hit batsman, senior Nick Wolfe cleared the bases with a double deep into the left center field gap.

Wolfe then scored on a ground ball from sophomore Jeff Tertel that went through the legs of the shortstop.

Wolfe drove in another run with a single the next inning.

In the second game, Wolfe went the distance giving up just one hit while striking out seven batters.

Juniors Trevor James and Lucas Forker drove in three of the Bison runs.

After four blow out victories against much lesser competition, Lijewski said the doubleheader sweep against a good Our Lady of the Lake squad was a good barometer for measuring how far his defending District 4 championship team can go this season.

"We've been waiting for this. We wanted to see exactly what we're made of," he said.

With more consistent hitting from just a few more batters, Lijewski said "we're going to be hard to deal with. Our pitching is good. Our defense is really good. I'm excited."

Man, I just got a bunch of guys around me that trust me, I say it all the time. Those guys trust me to take those shots and some nights they fall and tonight was one of those nights. *— Walter Clayton, Jr.*

LOOKING FOR SUMMER HELP AT NEW BUFFALO FAMILY BEACH HOUSE

STARTING BEFORE MEMORIAL DAY, ENDING ON OR AFTER LABOR DAY
(CAN USE HELP AFTER TO PUT AWAY OUTDOOR ITEMS)

Musts:
- Go-getter attitude
- Driver's license
- Be comfortable with dogs and older kids (ages 13 & 16)
- Weekends are mandatory (Tu/Wed off)
- About 40 hours per week

Responsibilities (including but not limited to):

Beach
- Set up/take down chairs, umbrellas & beach towels
- Clean/maintain beach towels, grill & picnic area, shuffleboard court, beach house, stairs to house, etc.

Pool
- Uncover pool & furniture
- Set up umbrellas
- Skim pool
- Clean/maintain pool deck, terrace, towels, pool cover, grill & tables, window ledges, etc.
- Water plants
- Cover pool & furniture, close umbrella

Watson (Pet Labrador)
- Brush daily outside
- Pick up after him
- Feed twice a day
- Walk daily (pending extreme weather)

Miscellaneous
- Unload diswasher as needed
- Take out trash
- Maintain terrace (water trees, sweep, uncover/cover chairs)
- Water flowers
- Wash and keep boat towels supplied in garage
- Grocery runs, Lunch pick Up, Dinner pick up as needed
- Uncover and cover screen porch furniture daily
- Other miscellaneous tasks as needed

Please contact Lynn Vear at lynnvear@comcast.net to set up an interview

To Your Health

COLUMN BY KAREN EDWARDS ND

IS GLUTEN FREE FOR YOU

Gluten is a protein that is found naturally in wheat, barley and rye. This protein can cause inflammation in the small intestine of people who have sensitivities to this protein. Gluten intolerance can produce diarrhea, weight loss/gain, abdominal pains, bloating, fatigue, skin rashes, IBS, fluctuance, joint pain, blurry vision, headaches, even neurological problems that mimic MS.

If you have some of these issues, you may want to look at your diet and see if you are experiencing gluten intolerances. Try going two weeks without ANY gluten in your diet and see the change you can make for your better health.

In my clinic, I took most patients off gluten foods that had symptoms. These foods are not necessary to achieve optimal health. This can be a difficult food elimination, asgluten is in most breads, cereals, cookies, pasta, baked goods, pastries, pies, crackers, pretzels and so on.

If you were to get truly organically raised wheat, no chemicals and non GMO, then the tolerance can be more acceptable to the villi (finger like projections that line the wall in our small intestine,) like it was in the days long ago.

When foods are Genetically Modified (GMO), they have had specific changes introduced into their DNA. Since the introduction of GMO's and the chemical spray Glyphosate, I have seen a phenomenal increase in gluten sensitivities. It is in the mass commercial farming of wheat, corn, soy and canola. In my opinion, the more GMO foods we ingest, the more ill health issues we see.

Celiac is a genetic autoimmune disease. This is nothing to play around with. It is a serious disorder. A diet change is mandatory with this. You need to work with your healthcare practitioner on eating a living foods diet and reversing the damage to the villi. Continuing to eat gluten foods if you are celiac can lead to cancer and other life-threatening imbalances.

Gluten Sensitivity is more of a digestive issue, where Symptoms are generally less severe, and can include headaches, gut problems and worsening of skin conditions such as eczema. Intolerance is much less likely to be life-threatening than true celiac. I have found that if there is a sensitivity, that the person can still have gluten foods, IF it is organic and non-GMO. If you have a true allergic effect with gluten such as celiac disease, stay away from ALL gluten products. Your life truly depends on it.

If you have gone gluten free and are still having health issues, check your medications and supplements. Most of the time these are laced with gluten, as this is a common binding agent. Talk with your pharmacist to know for sure, and know your source of nutritional supplements. Even the most expensive can have gluten binders.

Gluten is disguised under many names. If you are eating packaged foods, know these names. Go to www.celiac.com for a pocket list to help you with the names of hidden gluten. For a great food inspired video, watch "Forks over Knives."

Disclaimer: Nothing in these articles is meant to replace medical advice. If you are on medications, do not stop taking them. This is for educational purposes.

Karen Edwards is a board-Certified Dr. of Naturopathy, Master Herbalist, Vegan and Raw food Chef. She is owner of Holistic Alternatives in New Buffalo and La Porte for over 25 years.

Unsafe historic church building demolished

BY STAN MADDUX

MICHIGAN CITY - A once bustling historic church known more recently as a public safety threat has been torn down in Michigan City.

God's Grace Church at 301 E. Barker Avenue was condemned by the city after barricades had been placed around the structure in November from the risk of a bulging and cracked brick outside wall collapsing.

During a Board of Public Works & Safety meeting then, Interim Minister Lisa Jackson appealed for additional time to obtain a cost estimate to see if the necessary repairs were financially within reach of her congregation.

But, after numerous bricks dropped from the still unrepaired wall recently, demolition crews on April 9 knocked down the building.

"It's a little sad but it had to come down," said Fred Klinder, who has lived on Belden St. just a few hundred feet away from the church for about 25 years.

Kathy Stransky, who has resided across the street from the over century old church for almost her entire life, said she was very sad, yet relieved.

Stransky, 70, said she was especially concerned about the wall collapsing on children in the dense residential neighborhood with a grade school across the street from the church.

She also worried about the potential of children venturing over to play on a stairway and falling into a gap between the top of a stairway and back door of the church.

On windy days, Stransky said the structure made "crackling" sounds from the many loose bricks in the buckled wall shifting.

Seeing the church brought down to rubble, though, still weighed heavily on her heart.

"It's been my longtime neighbor," she said.

Also feeling a sense of loss were Robert and Tracy McLean, who were married in the building in 1986 when it was home to the Full Gospel Church of Deliverance.

The Michigan City residents were also church members with Mrs. McLean teaching Sunday school in classrooms set up in the basement.

"Very heartbreaking," she said.

Mr. McLean said the inside resembled a "movie theatre" with pews on a sloped floor running down to the pulpit and a balcony.

"It was a neat old church, but even back in the 80's it needed work," she said.

The last time the McLean's were in the building was about 1990 when their church relocated to another part of Michigan City at 2700 Ohio St. where it still is today.

Stransky said she never attended what was believed to be one of the first Scandinavian churches in the community.

But, she remembers when many people of Swedish ancestry living in the neighborhood walked with suits and dresses on to the church from their homes.

Stransky said she also used to sit outside the doors with other neighborhood kids, occasionally, and sing along to the songs they could hear being sung during services.

"We'd sing with them, Jesus Loves Me, and all kinds of stuff," she said.

Sometimes, Stransky said they were invited inside after services for cookies and juice.

Stransky said the church once had a strong congregation judging by the number of people walking up to the doors and their vehicles parked along the streets for services, weddings and funerals.

She said activity at the church, though, had greatly diminished over the past few years.

"They were struggling. There was no doubt they were struggling," she said.

Klinder, 81, said he and his wife on their daily walks past the church began noticing the outside wall cracked and bulging a few years ago.

His memories of the church date back to when he was a child riding his bicycle to the playground at Marsh Elementary School and seeing people showing up for services at the church across the street.

Klinder, a member of the Michigan City Planning Commission, said there's been considerable effort over the years to position the city better for the future through redevelopment, but the loss of history is still sad.

"This is all part of it, I guess. You got to get rid of the old and get some of the new," he said.

Skyler York, the city's Director of Planning and Inspection, said demolition orders are a last resort once all previous attempts to get properties into compliance with local codes have failed.

Miss Bridgman Ava Starbuck crowned 2025 Miss Blossomtime

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

For Ava Starbuck, the second time was the charm in terms of achieving her dream.

After the 18-year-old senior at Bridgman High School was crowned first runner-up to Miss Bridgman last year, she was crowned the 2025 Miss Bridgman after deciding to give it another go.

It was a decision that, ultimately, led to her being crowned 2025 Miss Blossomtime at the Lake Michigan College Mendal Center in Benton Harbor during the "Hurray for Hollywood"-themed Miss Blossomtime pageant Monday, April 14.

"Get out there and chase your dream because you can make it happen" was Ava's advice to the audience upon being crowned.

The daughter of Jamie and Dan Starbuck, Ava plans on majoring in aerospace engineering at the University of Notre Dame.

She plays volleyball and softball, is a member of the National Honor Society and is president of her senior class.

Royalty runs in her blood: Her aunt, Julie Starbuck, was Miss Blossomtime 1989 and her mom and aunt, Jessica Zaremba, were both Miss Bridgman.

"It feels like my hard work paid off and I'm excited to be a representative of southwest Michigan – it meant a lot to me to get back here and do it again, it took courage, but it obviously paid off," she said.

Mom Jamie said she believes Ava's impact as Miss Blossomtime will reach the far reaches of her community and beyond.

"It's what she's dreamt of doing and twice she came back and tried it again because she said, 'I want to make an

Miss New Buffalo Ellen Ripley does a Carribean Cruises style commercial.

Ava Starbuck is crowned 2025 Miss Blossomtime by 2024 Miss Blossomtime Armani Collins.

Ava Starbuck dons an astronaut outfit for her commercial.

Ava Starbuck strikes a pose onstage.

Miss New Buffalo Ellen Ripley graces the stage.

Members of the 2025 Blossomtime Court begin their reigns.

Mr. Blossomtime contestants perform their opening number.

Ava Starbuck graces the stage.

The Miss contestants perform an opening number.

Miss Three Oaks and River Valley Ava-Marie Ledesma strikes a pose onstage

Mr. New Buffalo Ekolu Brown introduces himself.

Miss New Buffalo Ellen Ripley introduces herself

impact here in southwest Michigan and this is the way to do it,'" she said.

Ava said she most looks forward to spending time with her court and getting to know the communities as well as the Blessing of the Blossoms.

Joining Ava on the Miss Blossomtime Court is first runner-up, Miss Spirit of Blossomtime from St. Joseph Avery Valenti; second runner-up Miss Eau Claire/Sodus Malayna Klug and Miss Congeniality, Miss Buchanan Chloe Aalfs.

Miss New Buffalo Ellen Ripley was among the seven finalists that were chosen out of a pool of 21 contestants. Other finalists were Miss St. Joseph Addison Covert and Miss Stevensville Lillian Smith.

On Sunday night, Miss Three Oaks/River Valley Ava-Marie Ledesma was one the three contestants to win a Commercial Award, with her Capital One "What's in Your Wallet"-inspired commercial, as well as the Bob Braamse Community Service Scholarship Award.

Crowned 2025 Mr. Blossomtime at the "Aloha"-themed Mr. Blossomtime Competition and Showcase of Queens Sunday, April 14, was Ross Bettich from Stevensville.

The son of Trisha and Randy Bettich, Ross is a junior at Lakeshore High School.

Upon crowning, Bettich said he looks forward to representing the 21 Blossomtime communities to his "fullest extent...It feels like a dream."

Joining him on the Mr. Blossomtime Court are first runner-up Breal Dorris from South Haven, second runner-up Rowan Iwaniuk from Niles and Mr. Nice Guy Luke Laffey from Berrien Springs.

In addition to Ross, Breal, Rowan and Luke, Bryson Prillwitz from Hartford was also a top five finalist.

The finalists were chosen from a pool of 27 contestants.

The emcees for both nights were Lainie Lu Von Behren, a former Miss St. Joseph and Miss Blossomtime 1988 and Phil McDonald, athletic director at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School.

Judges for Mr. Blossomtime were Brandy Godush Cox, Hunter Ackerman and Amanada Brigman. Showcase of Queens judges were Barabra Campbell, Corbin Wagner and Lauren Foley. Miss Blossomtime judges were James E. Campbell, Lisa Bowman Walters and Bret McAtee.

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NEW BUFFALO

Area's annual guide unveiled to chamber members

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Patty Knicker and Kimberlee Wendt unveil the 2025 Harbor Country Guide

It takes a lot of effort to put together the premiere guide of everything that there is to see and do on this corner of southwest Michigan.

Kimberlee Wendt, executive director of the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce, said that it's a "small but mighty group" that creates the Harbor Country Guide.

"It truly is a labor of love over the entire year," she said at the 2025 guide's unveiling, which took place at the upper level of The Marina Grand Resort in New Buffalo Thursday, April 10.

A picture of a golden sand dune, with footprints leading to the icy blue waters of Lake Mich-igan below, that was taken by Patty Knicker, the chamber's member development manager, is the 2025 guide's cover.

Wendt said that Knicker was a "major photo contributor" for this year's guide.

"She went out and captured photos all year from a first-person perspective and to bring the reader in – to visualize themselves in Harbor Country, which is the general theme for the publication this year," she said.

Wendt thanked the advertisers for putting together the numerous ads that are plastered across the pages.

"It's partly because you're giving us that advertising support but also that you're putting to-gether these beautiful ads that also serves as our member directory," she said.

Guests applaud the new guide

Tim Rogers of Fusion Design Group Ltd. did the production design and layout, with Wendt adding that his graphic firm has done work on producing the guide for the last 25 years.

Chuck Garasic volunteered to take the large shipment of 14 pallets of guides that come in-to the chamber and store them in a "little, teeny, tiny shed."

Knicker, who worked on the production side, also collected ads for the past several months and helped Wendt improve the entire guide, which included the member directories, the addresses, the phone numbers – "everything there to make sure it's as perfect as we can get."

Mandi Buckland, who headed the guide's editorial and infographics, included new graphics with QR codes and refreshed the maps.

Chamber members could tour the resort's facelift, which includes the transformed lobby as well as upstairs event space.

Robert Kemper, managing director and president of The Marina Grand Resort, thanked those who were sitting in the room for working hard "every day to make people happy" and those who are new to the area for investing in Harbor Country.

He also thanked those who own year-round businesses.

"You have a special place in my heart because we are year-round as well – it's possible to survive 25 years open every day," he said.

Meijer evacuated for suicidal gunman inside store

BY STAN MADDUX

Meijer in Michigan City was evacuated after a gunman man chased by police ran inside the store and threatened to shoot himself.

Eventually, after several hours of negotiating, the man identified as 27 year old Nathan Gruntzel shot himself in the upper torso.

According to police, his injuries did not appear life threatening.

Michigan City Police said the situation began when officers about 9 p.m. Saturday, April 12, responded to Baymont Motel at 4128 Franklin St. on a report of children possibly being battered by the man inside their room.

Police said the mother of the children told investigators there was an argument after she learned her boyfriend, Gruntzel, was wanted in the state of Wisconsin for sexual assault of a child under the age of 13.

After confirming the warrant for his arrest, police said officers found Gruntzel in a vehicle in the parking lot of the motel.

Police said he stepped out of the vehicle and began running toward Meijer, where he jumped a fence into the Garden Center.

Officers chasing him on foot managed to contain Gruntzel to the Garden Center where he placed a gun to his head threatening to shoot, police said.

In response, the store was evacuated.

After six hours of trying to get him to put down the gun and surrender, Gruntzel shot himself, police said.

He was taken by ambulance to nearby Franciscan Health hospital and later transferred to a medical facility in South Bend for more advanced care.

OBITUARIES

NITA SUE "NINI" MURRAY

Nita Sue "Nini" Murray, 76, of Three Oaks died peacefully, Wednesday, April 9, 2025 in the presence of her family.

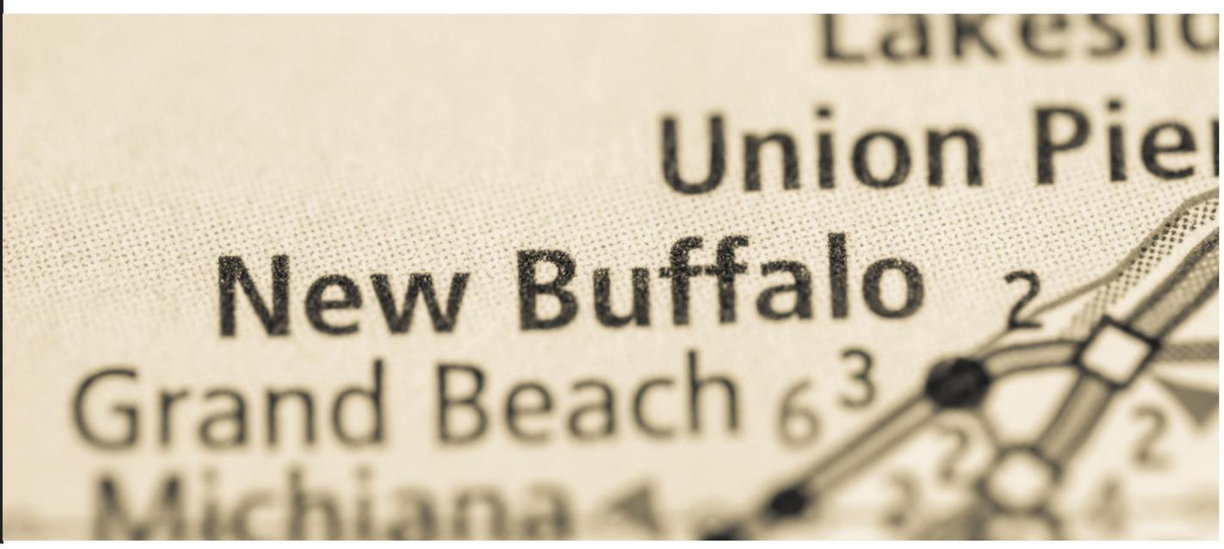
Her life began April 4, 1949 in South Bend, Indiana, the eldest of five children born to Leonard and Joyce Zboril. She married James Murray February 12, 1983 in her parent's home in Union Pier, Michigan. Nini lived a full life with acts of service as her love language. She enjoyed painting ceramics and gifting them to family and friends. She loved laying in the sun with a good Steven King book. She joyfully celebrated Halloween and had a party every year with family, friends, food, and candy for the children. Nini always had fun with her sisters, including Jackie; making bread and playing pinochle. She considered it a perfect day, when she had all her grandkids and great grandkids together in her home. She served proudly as a president and then past president of the New Buffalo Service League, where she made a lot of life-long friends. Nini will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by four grandchildren, James Cleary of Las Vegas, Nevada, Michele (Brandon) Checkley of Niles, Kiersten (Tim) Cornwell of Battle Creek, Samantha Raab of Dowagiac; eight great grandchildren, Izzie, Lucas, Emma, TJ, Madi, Abi, Elijah, Adrien; three sisters, Nancy (Bob) Gino of Union Pier, Paula (Ken) Dudiak of Sawyer, Patty (Paul) Zboril of Three Oaks; one brother, Leonard "Bob" (Jackie) Zboril, Jr. of Three Oaks; and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved husband, and her daughter, Rhonda.

Family and friends will gather Tuesday, April 15, 2025 from 10:30 a.m. until the time of memorial service at 11:30 a.m. in Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, 106 Ash Street East, Three Oaks.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Nini be made to The American Legion Randall Couchman Post #204, 204 West Lindon Street, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128, or to CASA of Cass County Michigan, via casscocasa.org/donate or 120 North Broadway Street, Suite 112, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, or to the New Buffalo Service League, Post Office Box 413, New Buffalo, Michigan 49117.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.



A Writer's Life...

DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION ANIMATION

BY JACK OLESKER

Out of place, out of time

Lori and I neared the far corner of the first floor, Sandy Fries at his desk, papers scattered. Seeing us coming, this time he impressed me as intelligent, butunfocused.

Lori said, "Sandy, you know Jack Olesker." He nodded. "Jack's going to be the assistant story editor for Care Bears. Give him an idea of where you're at and where he can help you."

Sandy said, "Sure."

Lori pointed to a desk butted up to Sandy's and told me, "That's your desk."

I was caught off guard but didn't show it. For a few nanoseconds I thought about how Andy hadn't actually offered me the position. He decreed I would be an assistant story editor, just like Lori was now telling me it was time for me to start working. No warning, no working up to it. Just "That's your desk."

Of course Jean and Andy had discussed everything with Lori. In a way I thought they were paying me a compliment, it being obvious I'd accept the assistant story editor position and that if I had any reluctance it would dissolve when I heard the starting salary. So seeing no benefit in wasting valuable time, Andy just told me I was going to be an associate story editor and Lori just pointed to my desk. As Lori walked away, I sat at my new desk, opposite Sandy's, ready to work.

The problem was I still didn't know what I was supposed to be doing. And just as importantly, in my mind, I didn't know if writing Care Bears scripts was going to be a part of my job...and whether or not I'd get paid for doing it now that I was on staff.

With Lori gone, Sandy sized me up. He started with, "I heard you wrote some episodes of The Littles." I smiled slightly, giving him the titles. He said, "Word is Judy Price liked them." I agreed that was accurate, not adding it was probably the reason I got the job as assistant story editor because it was obvious that was probably the reason I got the job as assistant story editor even though I still didn't know what the job of assistant story editor entailed. Sheesh!

Then, thankfully, Sandy forged ahead about the job. "It's not complicated. Writers bring me maybe half dozen story springboards at a time. I submit the ones I like to Lori who, I assume, submits the one's she likes to Jean, who decides which ones would make good episodes."

I noted Sandy had omitted Andy from this process, but I was pretty sure that was because Andy focused primarily on business while Jean focused primarily on creative. Fair enough.

Next Sandy explained, "After I get an approval from Jean, I assign the scripts to the writers. They write the scripts and deliver them to me. I work on the scripts and pass them to Lori. That's all there is to it."

I got a feeling that wasn't not all there was to it. "You kind of glossed over what's involved with the editing part."

He arched an eyebrow in question. "What do you mean?"

I answer, "Well, for a story editor isn't editing the biggest part of the process?"

His eyebrow was still raised as he tilted back in his chair, quiet again.

Jack Olesker's career in the entertainment industry spans over four decades. He has served as a story editor in L.A. as well as president of a motion picture and television company in Chennai, India. His writing ranges from Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, Care Bears and Hello Kitty's Furry Tale Theater to documentaries and horror novels and murder mysteries for adults.

HOROSCOPE

APRIL 17-23, 2025

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

If you have been working on changing your operations, then this week will go very smoothly, but if you have been resistant to change this week may take you by surprise. Be completely honest about how your current system is working, be ready to remove, delete, or update your whole operation.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

There is a serious need to go it alone and identify your own problems. Don't let other people diagnose your issues or outline your healthcare routines. You are in total control of your body and can manage yourself just fine. The important thing is to embrace is your rock-solid will-power.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

You are prone to do things without planning, and this has gotten you into trouble before. Now you have the opportunity to see what is up and coming, and have the foresight to prepare, so do that. Take time to make the right move first, and then you won't have to back-track, or undo your hard-work.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

This week you will be contemplating what it would be like to get deeper into in a relationship. You have a definite idea of how you want things to be in your home and private life. You'll be okay with spending more time together but in the end may pass on the idea of permanently staying together.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

A new health program may challenge your ideas about food and how your body is reacting to it. You are more willing to look at the deeper causes or the earlier experiences you have had with food and nutrition, than ever before. It is time to compare your existing diet program with current scientific data.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

Take the initiative to communicate with strangers, socialize with unusual groups, and don't be afraid to approach any estranged friends you might run into this week. Be open minded, listen, and you just might discover something unusual and motivational, that will be essential to your soul's evolution.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

This is the week to pick out new colors for your bedroom, re-arrange the furniture, or design some outside living space. Let you focus and concentration turn towards home projects that will make your space more functional. Get rid of clutter, unused items, and create more space to breathe in.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

It is important you stop thinking about all the changes you would like to make and just start doing it. What you want is not that far off and the Stars are moving into an alignment that generates prosperity. Once you start doing the work, the changes will happen very quickly. Moving on and up!

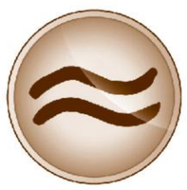
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

Some of your support staff or systems may not follow through as you had hoped. You might have to confront someone about where their loyalties are. Perhaps they have not understood how much you were counting on them or the system in place isn't designed for your type of problem.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

You will be very adamant in taking care of your own problems and fixing things yourself, but it doesn't hurt to get tips from someone who has already done it. You may feel like your problems are not complicated enough to warrant the need for help, but knowing someone can help is comforting.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



You will be feeling more vivacious and robust physically. It is important you turn this energy inward and challenge some of your mental processes, rather than focus on the problems of those around you. Follow your own ideas of happiness and go deeper into your own experiences.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

Lady luck might not be with you at the casino this week, but stop by a garage sale and you may find the deal of a life-time. You will find yourself in the right place at the right time to get super deals on furniture, antiques, and unusual artifacts. Keep your eyes open and stop at those weird flea-markets.

All things will be clear and distinct to the man who does not hurry; haste is blind and improvident. — *Livy*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

		1		9			2	
5	4	3				9		
						1		
	5							2
4					2	3	1	7
				7			8	
	9	7	3	8				
	3			5		8		

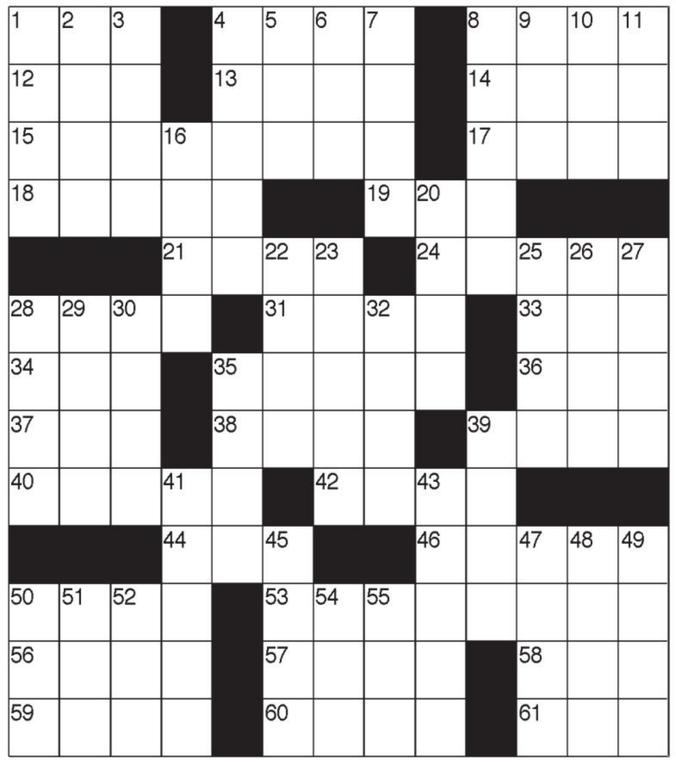
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Cigarette: Brit. slang
4 Euphemistic oath
8 Shak. villain
12 Feminine (suf.)
13 Yahi tribe survivor
14 Freshwater worm
15 Bony
17 Load cargo
18 Head
19 Civil War commander
21 Cavity (suf.)
24 String of mules
28 Walk through
31 Singing voice
33 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
34 Amer. Basketball Assn. (abbr.)
35 Cement
36 Receipt (abbr.)
37 Rom. bronze
38 Killer whale
39 Wife of Jacob
40 Side
42 Photographer's solution
44 At the age of (Lat.)
46 Door (Lat.)
50 Sea bird
53 Balm
56 Powdered pumice
57 Of the kind of (suf.)
58 Ohio college town
59 Wet
60 Sprint
61 Dude

DOWN

1 Exchequer
2 Egypt. cross
3 Earth personified
4 Sacred (pref.)
5 Superlative (suf.)
6 Oriental tea
7 Rub out
8 Body of water
9 Antiaircraft artillery (abbr.)
10 Sheep disease
11 Pindar work
16 Parasitic insects
20 Moderate
22 Ivory (Lat.)
23 Fastening
25 Rhine tributary
26 Jackfruit
27 Pledge
28 Women's Aux. Air Force (abbr.)
29 Brother of Seth
30 Hindu servant
32 Visit
35 Jab
39 Loess
41 Nat'l Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People (abbr.)
43 Tar
45 Batrachian
47 Fist
48 Erase
49 Nipa palm
50 Standard (abbr.)
51 "The Jungle Book" python
52 City on the Danube
54 Thus (Lat.)
55 Birthplace of Constantine



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PUBLIC NOTICES

VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH
WEED CONTROL AND GRASS CUTTING NOTICE

To property owners and occupants of land in the Village of Grand Beach, Berrien County, Michigan. Notice is given that all weeds, brush and grass growing on any lands must be cut and maintained at a height not to exceed six inches and destroyed and removed to prevent such weeds, brush, and grass from going to seed, from becoming a fire hazard and/or creating a condition detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Village. Failure to comply with the notice and ordinance on or before May 1 shall make the property owner liable for the costs of cutting, destroying and removing the weeds, brush, and grass by the Village or its representatives or agents, and the costs may be levied and collected in the same manner as taxes are levied and collected, with the costs being a lien upon the land. The Village may cut the weeds, brush and grass as often as necessary to achieve compliance with the ordinance and charge costs to the property owner.

Kimberly Wolnik
Clerk-Treasurer

VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH
BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE 2025-115, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 2022-104, AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGISTRATION AND REGULATION OF RENTAL PROPERTIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS TO CLARIFY THE DEFINITION OF A DWELLING, AND TO DEFINE MAXIMUM BEDROOM OCCUPANCY AND REVOCATION TERMS AND PROCEDURES.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that in accordance with Michigan law, the Grand Beach Village Council adopted amendments to Ordinance 2022-14 on March 19, 2025, at a regular Village Council meeting.

The ordinance amendments will be effective December 31, 2025. The full text of the amendments can be reviewed by contacting the Village Clerk, Kimberly Wolnik, at 269-469-3141 or by email at clerk@grandbeach.org during regular business hours.

Kimberly Wolnik, Village Clerk

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PET OF THE WEEK

PUFFIN

Puffin wants to meet you, and hopefully, you will adopt each other. She is about seven-months-old, spayed, and her vaccinations are up-to-date. When you introduce yourself, Puffin maybe reserved at first. She loves chin scratches and, when comfortable, she rolls over for the big stretches and will welcome belly rubs. Puffin prefers a quiet home, is cat-friendly, and would love a sweet, kind companion. The more feathery the toy, the more interested she is, and she gets happier chasing them.

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LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
New Buffalo Times
— SINCE 1942 —

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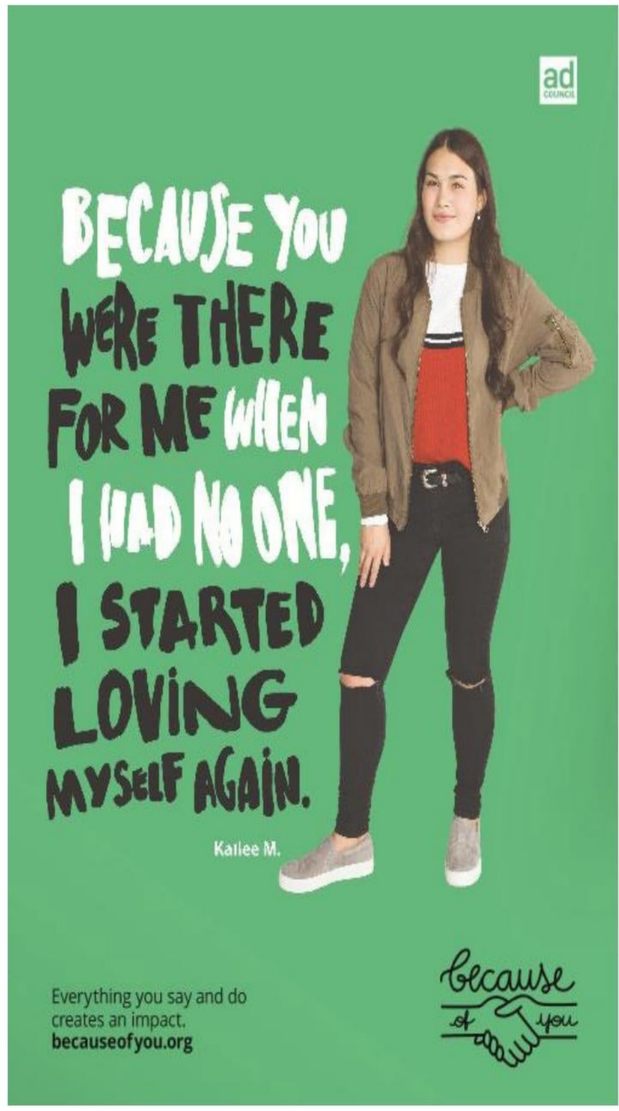
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Ribbon-cutting on tap for first Michigan section of Marquette Greenway

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at 10:30 a.m. Friday, April 25, to celebrate the opening of the first completed Michigan portion of the Marquette Greenway in New Buffalo City and New Buffalo Township.

This event will take place at the Trailhead at Smith and Mechanic streets in downtown New Buffalo (rain location is New Buffalo City Hall). The public is welcome, and coffee and donuts will be served. This event is being hosted by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce in tandem with the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce and Friends of Berrien County Trails.

Numerous participants will gather to celebrate this remarkable achievement that will ultimately connect to a 60-mile non-motorized walking and cycling trail from Chicago to New Buffalo. Volunteers from the founding group, Friends of Berrien County Trails, as well as local bicycle enthusiasts, hikers, funders, donors, local and county public officials, and state representatives will attend and speak about what the project means for them and their communities.

For over a decade, volunteers worked diligently to raise funds, apply for grants and help plan the local piece of the puzzle that would connect to a 60-mile hiking and cycling path that begins in Calumet Park in east Chicago and ends in New Buffalo. The trail connects the coastal communities of three states around the southern bend of Lake Michigan. While the Marquette Greenway terminates in New Buffalo, work continues to connect to the Red Arrow Trail to the north and beyond.

"When we first had this idea, we were absolutely blown away by how many folks jumped in to participate. It wasn't easy and we certainly had moments of discouragement. We could not have done it without the steady hand and professional guidance of Marcy Hamilton from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission," Gary Wood, president of Friends of Harbor Country Trails, a local citizen-based, non-profit seeking to connect Berrien County through a network of trials, said.

According to Hamilton, deputy executive director at SWMPC, the "Marquette Greenway walking and cycling trail will be transformational for community residents and visitors alike."

"Earlier sections were built in Illinois and Indiana, but this is the first section completed in Michigan," she said. "Although this first phase is just three miles in length, it was fraught with complications we had not encountered before. Its completion now serves as a lynchpin and connector to the Red Arrow Trail further north in Michigan."

To illustrate one specific challenge, Hamilton assisted New Buffalo Township in securing an easement from Amtrak. This 10-foot-wide, paved path follows the train tracks along a portion of US 12 Highway, south of New Buffalo and without the Amtrak easement, it could not have been built.

Funding was contributed from many diverse public and private sources including The Pokagon Fund, New Buffalo Township, the City of New Buffalo, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) federal Transportation Alternatives Program, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program, Berrien Community Foundation, many generous family foundations and more than 200 wonderful individuals. Contractor Kalin Construction and the engineering firm Abonmarche patiently oversaw the year-long trail construction, which began last spring. The trailhead at Smith and Mechanic Streets features parking, a picnic area and a bike repair station. Michigan's Phase II along Grand Beach Road to the Indiana state line will be completed in 2026 in cooperation with the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Berrien County Road Department, Grand Beach Village and New Buffalo Township.

The tri-state trail will connect five counties with fifteen municipalities, one National Park, one state park and be accessible to almost 200,000 people living within 1.5 miles of the trail along the southern shore of Lake Michigan.

"We will continue to work to connect the Marquette Greenway up the Lake Michigan coastline and one day, it will connect walkers and cyclists all the way to the Mackinac Bridge," Wood said.

For more information on the Marquette Greenway visit https://www.berrientrails.org/marquettegw.asp or https://www.in.gov/nirpc/transportation/the-marquette-greenway-project-site/.

-STAFF REPORTS

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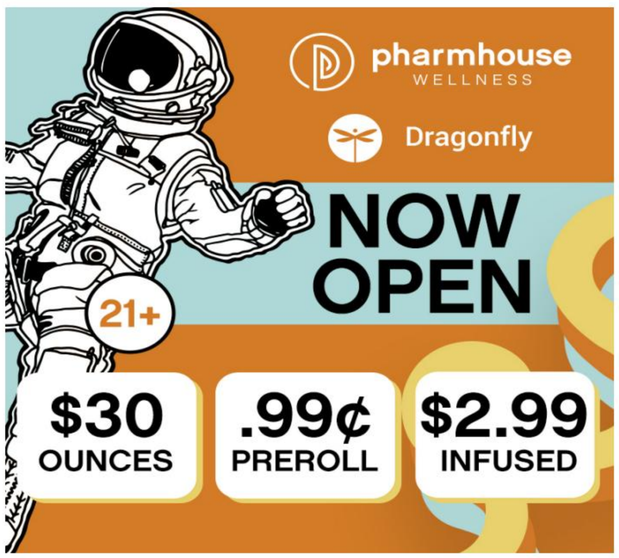

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